

laser light onto a workpiece;

a scanning member that guides said laser light into said $f\theta$ lens to separate a light ray having a specified wavelength from said laser light, said wavelength selector including a prism disposed along a light axis of said laser light, and a spatial filter including a focusing lens and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength.

Please amend claim 11, as follows:

11 (Twice Amended). A laser processing method, comprising:

emitting laser light from a laser oscillator;

separating a light ray having a specified wavelength out of the laser light using a wavelength selector including a prism disposed along a light axis of the laser light, and a spatial filter including a focusing lens and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength; and

converging the separated light ray onto a workpiece using an $f\theta$ lens.

REMARKS

Re-examination and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 6 and 12 are allowable over the art of record. In this regard, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims 6 and 12. While Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indication that certain identified features are not disclosed by the

references, as noted by the Examiner, Applicants wish to clarify that the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and the basis for patentability of these claims is based on the totality of the features recited therein.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for discussing this application with their U.S. counsel by telephone on April 30, 2003. During the communication, independent claims 1, 7, 9 and 11 were discussed, along with the art applied by the Examiner to reject the claims. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that the art applied to reject the claims (e.g., Applicants' "admitted" prior art and U.S. Patent 5,914,978 to WELCH) do not disclose or suggest that an aperture is provided in the shield to pass only a light ray having a specific wavelength. The Examiner noted that while Applicants argued this distinction in their previously filed response, the limitation was not previously claimed. (Likewise, Applicants note that page 5 of the Office Action indicates the same).

Accordingly, the Examiner recommended over-coming the rejection by amending the claims to indicate that the shield includes an aperture. Applicants thank the Examiner for his suggestion, and herewith amend independent claims 1, 7, 9 and 11 in the manner discussed. In view of this amendment, Applicants submit that it is not necessary to discuss the rejection in further detail.

In view of the current amendment, Applicants submit that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate the allowability of the pending claims, and to pass this application to issue.

Pursuant to M.P.E.P. §714.13, Applicants submit that entry of the present amendment is appropriate because the proposed amended claims avoid the rejections set forth in the last Office Action, resulting in the application being placed in condition for allowance; or alternatively, the revised claims place the application in better condition for purposes of appeal. Further, no additional claims are added for the Examiner's consideration, and the revised claims do not present any new issues that would require any further consideration or search by the Examiner. In this regard, Applicants note that the feature of the shield including an aperture was previously before the Examiner (see page 6 of Applicants' February 14, 2003 amendment and page 5 of the Detailed Action associated with the April 8, 2003 Office Action), and thus, no new issue is raised. Accordingly, entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that the art of record, whether considered alone or in combination, fails to disclose or suggest the present invention as now defined by the pending claims, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

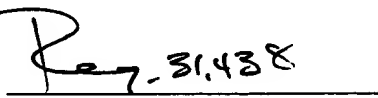

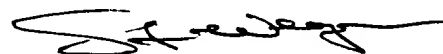
Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any

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additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

If there should be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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June 12, 2003
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Enclosure:
APPENDIX A - MARKED-UP CLAIMS

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1 (Twice Amended). A laser processing apparatus, comprising:

a laser oscillator that emits laser light;

an $f\theta$ lens positioned relative to the laser oscillator that converges said emitted laser light onto a workpiece; and

a wavelength selector interposed between said laser oscillator and said $f\theta$ lens to separate a light ray having a specified wavelength out of said laser light, said wavelength selector including a prism disposed along a light axis of said laser light, and a spatial filter including a focusing lens and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength.

7 (Twice Amended). A laser processing apparatus, comprising:

a laser oscillator that emits laser light;

an $f\theta$ lens positioned relative to said laser oscillator that converges said emitted laser light onto a workpiece; and

a wavelength selector interposed between said laser oscillator and said $f\theta$ lens to separate a light ray having a specified wavelength out of said laser light, wherein said wavelength selector includes a diffraction grating disposed along a light axis of said laser light, and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength.

9 (Twice Amended). A laser processing apparatus, comprising:

a laser oscillator that emits laser light;

an $f\theta$ lens positioned relative to said laser oscillator that converges said emitted laser light onto a workpiece;

a scanning member that guides said laser light into said $f\theta$ lens to separate a light ray having a specified wavelength from said laser light, said wavelength selector including a prism disposed along a light axis of said laser light, and a spatial filter including a focusing lens and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength.

11 (Twice Amended). A laser processing method, comprising:

emitting laser light from a laser oscillator;

separating a light ray having a specified wavelength out of the laser light using a wavelength selector including a prism disposed along a light axis of the laser light, and a spatial filter including a focusing lens and a shield with an aperture that passes only a light ray having a specified wavelength; and

converging the separated light ray onto a workpiece using an $f\theta$ lens.